

March 15, 1976

Mr. Bernard Schoenberg
MAN AND MEDICINE
College of Physicians and Surgeons of Columbia University
630 West 168 th Street
New York, N.Y. 10032

Dear Mr. Schoenberg,

Thank you for sending me Dr. Krooth's editorial. I appreciate the opportunity that you presented but I think I will ask for a rain-check, for an occasion where there can be a sharper confrontation of points of view.

The trouble here is that I agree to a very large extent with what I believe to be Dr. Krooth's position; but I believe also that he has expressed himself in ways that may lead to greater misunderstanding than he predicts. His hypothetical assumptions about the possibility of a genetic basis in racial differentials in academic performance are going to be taken as exhibition of his actual beliefs unless he makes much stronger disclaimers than he does. The wiser course would be to make alternative assumptions.

More factually I think that the popular culture aside there really are greater rewards for academic attainment - albeit not necessarily for its most extreme manifestations - than he asserts.

I am really not quite clear what is the main point that he would like to stress. If it is the essentiality of continuing to research in behavioral genetics, with which I certainly agree very strongly, then I might suggest that you call in Dr. Richard Lewontin at Harvard as a person more likely to be articulate and critical of that assertion. If he does respond, it is then perhaps quite possible that there will be a target and I would be more willing and interested in responding to further discussion.

Sincerely yours,

Joshua Lederberg
Professor of Genetics

JL/rr